



Programme Specification

**A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from
The University of Sheffield**

This programme specification covers the subject curriculum in **Sociology** for the following dual honours degree programme(s) and should be read in conjunction with the relevant specification for the second subject:

1. Programme Title(s)	2. Programme Code(s)	3. JACS Code(s)
Japanese and Sociology	EASU03	TL23
Economics and Sociology	ECNU10	LL13
English Language and Sociology	ELLU04	Q310
Geography and Sociology	GEOU05	LL73
History and Sociology	HSTU117	V100
Social and Political Studies	POLU02	L000
Psychology and Sociology	PSYU04	CL83
4. Level of Study	Undergraduate	
5a. Final Qualification	Bachelor of Arts with Honours (BA Hons)	
5b. QAA FHEQ Level	Honours	
6. Intermediate Qualification(s)	None	
7. Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable	
8. Faculty	Social Sciences (except ELLU04 and HISTU17 which are offered via the Faculty of Arts).	
9. Co-ordinating Department	The partner department is the co-ordinating department for all these dual programmes.	
10. Other Department(s) involved in teaching in the subject	None	
11. Mode(s) of Attendance	Full-time	
12. Duration of the Programme(s)	Three years	
13. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable	
14. Date of production/revision	June 2003	

15. Background to the programme and subject area

This programme involves the parallel study of Sociology with another major discipline. The juxtaposition of these complementary fields offers students a broad context for their intellectual development.

Sociology developed in the mid-nineteenth century, out of the need to understand a social world that was changing rapidly under the impact of industrialisation, urbanisation, migration and population growth. At the end of the twentieth century, the world is still changing, some would say even more rapidly. As information technology, ecological pressures, and global transport networks transform our experience of the here-and-now and our expectations of the future, social science is still vital to our understanding of the human situation.

The sociological perspective emphasises the need to understand how the daily lives of individuals, and the long-term patterns of social structure and policy, are each intertwined with the other. Sociology offers a broad spectrum of possibilities. The Department offers theoretical and empirical studies of modern industrial and post-industrial societies and patterns of social change, a concern with social interaction and the detail of everyday life, and the comparative sweep of social anthropology. Particular emphasis is placed upon the European dimension.

The Department of Sociological Studies at Sheffield has a long history of integrated research and teaching in sociology (and also in social policy, social work and more recently social anthropology). Many of the optional modules at levels two and three reflect staff research interests and are taught by leading researchers in their field. The department's teaching culture has four components:

- A curriculum designed to include a significant study of competing conceptual and theoretical perspectives in sociology and social policy;
- Innovation in teaching through active learning strategies, including group work, student projects and computer based learning;
- Opportunities for students to undertake placements in policy and practice orientated organisations related to identified regional needs;
- Research-focused course design and teaching.

The Department also has an international reputation as one of the top social science research departments in Britain. It was awarded a grade of 5 in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise, recognising the Department's vibrant research culture, the overall academic strength of our staff and the quality of the research environment. Combined with our "Excellent" grade in the Teaching Quality Assessment, the Department has confirmed its position as a provider of high quality research led teaching.

Sociology graduates are highly employable. In addition to teaching and research, the media, social work, the civil service, and management are among the careers in which a sociological imagination can prove useful.

16. Subject aims

The Department of Sociological Studies provides a high quality learning environment, committed to:

1. Encouraging the participation of students from diverse backgrounds;
2. Engendering a culture of student self-improvement and the development of life skills, thus facilitating a full contribution to the society in which they live and work;
3. Fostering respect for the traditions of Higher Education, including open enquiry, intellectual freedom and the advancement of knowledge.

The sociology component of the programme aims to produce graduates who:

4. Have knowledge and critical understanding of theoretical, methodological and conceptual issues in sociology;
5. Understand contemporary social processes and policies, and are able to evaluate different interpretations of them;
6. Use skills in logical thinking and foster a capacity for independent, critical judgement;
7. Exercise skills in the effective acquisition, selection and communication of ideas and information;
8. Are equipped with a range of transferable intellectual and practical skills that prepare them to enter employment or postgraduate studies.

17. Subject learning outcomes

On completion of this programme students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

K1	The relationships between individuals, groups and social institutions; the role of culture in social life; the social processes underpinning social change.
K2	Social context; the nature of social processes; social diversity and inequality.
K3	The value and importance of comparative analysis.
K4	The nature and appropriate use of diverse research strategies and methods in gaining sociological knowledge; the relationship between sociological argument and evidence.
K5	The key concepts and theoretical and methodological approaches in Sociology
K6	The distinctive character of Sociology in relation to other forms of understanding, such as its relation to other disciplines and to everyday explanations.

Skills and other attributes: On completion of this programme students will be able to demonstrate the following skills:

S1	General, cognitive and transferable: problem solving; making reasoned arguments; interpreting evidence and texts; written and oral communication skills in a variety of contexts; time planning; interpersonal and teamwork skills;
S2	Social inquiry, information technology and research: gathering, retrieving and synthesising information; identifying and appraising a range of research strategies and methods; conducting empirical research; statistical and other quantitative techniques at a preliminary level;
S3	Evaluative and analytical: judging and evaluating evidence; formulating sociologically informed questions; competence in using major sociological theoretical perspectives and applying them in social policy contexts; analysing, assessing and communicating empirical information; undertaking and presenting scholarly work;

S4	Critical and reflective skills: appreciating the complexity and diversity of social situations; assessing the merits of competing theories and explanations; understanding the ethical implications of sociological enquiry; developing the ability to reflect upon their own accumulation of knowledge; recognising the relevance of sociological knowledge to policy and everyday life.
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18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

- 1. Lectures** are a major teaching method in most modules at all three levels of the degree (K1 – K6, S1 – S4)
- 2. Seminars** are used throughout the programme. At Level 1 all dual honours students attend weekly seminars on the twenty-credit *Sociological Studies Honours Seminar* programme that is the central focus for all learning outcomes at Level 1. Here the students are exposed to the range of knowledge and skills in social policy and sociology, along with the more generic study skills noted in Section 16. Seminars are used extensively in Levels 2 and 3 and are designed to reinforce knowledge gained from lectures and to explore relevant issues in depth. Seminars thus contribute both to the achievement of knowledge and understanding (K1 – K6) and to the development of key skills (S1 – S5).
- 3. Student-led groups** are an integral part of two approved Level 2/3 modules. In one approved module at Level 2 (*Practising Applied Research*) and Level 3 (*Social Research Practice*) the whole learning experience is based on group project work (S1).
- 4. Independent study** is essential to the successful completion of the programme. New students are introduced to study skills through assessed portfolios undertaken in their first semester as part of the core module in *Social Inquiry* and throughout the whole year in the *Sociological Studies Honours Seminar* programme. The amount of independent study broadly expected for each module is set out in the course information, although it is recognised that this will vary from student to student. Independent study is generally geared towards the assimilation and further clarification of material gleaned from lectures, preparation for seminars, preparation for written assessments, and the broader development of knowledge of the field of study. Supervised independent study for a dissertation or extended essay is a core element of level three of the degree. Independent study thus contributes to the development of all the programme learning outcomes, S1 – S5.
- 5. One to one supervision** is provided for students undertaking the Extended Essay or the Dissertation. These sessions are arranged between student and supervisor and it is here that the intellectual and methodological issues of independent study are discussed, and where students get help and support in planning their work.
- 6. Open-access surgeries** are optional timetabled sessions, available for discussion of academic questions and problems, advice on essays, discussion of reading and so on. These sessions reinforce all knowledge and understanding outcomes (K1 – K6) and while supportive of all skills outcomes are particularly relevant to S3 and S5.

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

Overview

Innovations in teaching have been accompanied by novel assessment forms. Assessment methods used across the range of modules at all levels include:

- Written examinations designed to test subject knowledge (K1 – K6)
- Essays and project work designed to test subject knowledge, to increase autonomy in student learning, and to develop transferable skills (K1 – K6 and S1 – S5)
- Oral presentations and group work designed to test organisational, communicative and interpersonal skills (S1 – S5)

Detailed look at assessment

At Level 1 most of the lecture-based modules are assessed by coursework, normally an essay of around 2,000 words, and the seminar-based modules are assessed by examination and portfolio work. The *Social Inquiry* module, in addition to its assessed skills-based portfolio, also incorporates an assessed book review.

A wide variety of assessment methods are employed in the optional modules at Levels 2 and 3. These include:

- a placement report
- policy briefing document
- ethnography review
- a commentary on a scholarly debate
- research report

- peer and tutor assessed group presentation

The other modules use essays and examinations (seen and unseen), or a combination of the two.

The Level 3 *Extended Essay* - a substantial report 7,500 words – is optional for Sociology dual honours programmes (except HISTU17 and EASU03, in which the Extended Essay is a core module). These essays are assessed on their application of research skills, their interpretation of existing literature and their organisational coherence. The extended essay is particularly relevant to programme learning outcomes K6 and S5.

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

The research interests of departmental staff and the research strategy of the Department of Sociological Studies

Subject Benchmark Statements

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx>

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008)

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx>

University Strategic Plan

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan>

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2011-16)

http://www.shef.ac.uk/lets/strategy/lts11_16

20. Programme structure(s) and regulations

The dual degree is composed of two distinct components, each of which constitutes approximately 50% of the credit weighting. The curriculum is designed to progressively promote the depth of understanding over the three years of undergraduate study. Teaching, especially at Level 3, is closely linked to the research interests of staff.

Level 1

At Level 1, students are required to take 60 credits within the Department of Sociological Studies.

Levels 2 and 3

At Levels 2 and 3, modules are valued at 20 credits and students take 60 Sociological Studies credits each year.

There are two core modules at Level 2. There is one core module at Level 3 in programmes HISTU17 and EASU03.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available online at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/govern/calendar/reggs.html>.

21. Student development over the course of study in the subject

The curriculum is designed to allow students progressively to achieve the specified learning outcomes. Coherence and a balance between breadth and depth of study are promoted by a combination of compulsory and optional modules. Progression through the programme structure is informed by two principles:

- Subject specialisation – students can increase their knowledge, understanding and skills in specific areas of interest, by clustering optional modules;
- Student choice – students are supported in taking responsibility for shaping their degree programme and constructing intellectual and substantive pathways through available modules.

Level 1 is designed to provide a foundation of theoretical, empirical and methodological work that is appropriate for students who are familiar or unfamiliar with sociological concepts. Level 2 builds on this foundation to cover all the main topics of the programme. Level 2 provides the basis for more specialised Level 3 options.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/prospective/>

23. Additional information

The Department is proud to host an active Sociology Society – run by and for students. The society aims to provide academic and social support for all students in the Department of Sociological Studies. The group organises seminars with guest speakers, maintains the Departmental Library, produces a newsletter and holds regular social events.

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid>.